

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMCONSUL WINNIPEG
TO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
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UNCLAS WINNIPEG 146

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: EFIN, CA
SUBJ: MANITOBA BUDGET ANNOUNCED

1. ON APRIL 22, MANITOBA GOVERNMENT INTRODUCED 1977 PROVINCIAL

BUDGET TALLING ESTIMATED DOLS 1.166 MILLION. TERMED AN
"ELECTION YEAR BUDGET", IT CONTAINED FEW SURPRISES. SOME OF
THE HIGHLIGHTS:

-- NO NEW TAXES OR TAX INCREASES ARE FORESEEN,
-- SELECTIVE REDUCTIONS COULD REDUCE INCOME TAXES FOR AVERAGE
4-MEMBER FAMILY BY ABOUT DOLS 120,
-- 5 PER CENT PROVINCIAL SALES TAX ON INSULATION MATERIALS HAS
BEEN ELIMINATED,
-- A SPECIAL PROVINCIAL LOAN FUND IS PLANNED TO LEND UP TO DOLS
1,000 TO HOMEOWNERS TO IMPROVE INSULATION. LOANS WOULD BE REPAYED
OVER 20 YEARS DIRECTLY TO UTILITY COMPANY.
-- A JOB CREATION PROGRAM IS PLANNED, BUT DETAILS WILL NOT BE
FORTHCOMING FOR SEVERAL WEEKS.

2. BUDGET FORESEES DEFICIT OF DOLS 8.6 MILLION, AND NEED TO
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BORROW DOLS 552 MILLION, A 30 PER CENT INCREASE OVER 1976. 80
PER CENT OF THAT BORROWING WILL BE USED BY GOVERNMENT CORPORATIONS
(MANITOBA HYDRO, MANITOBA TELEPHONE, ETC.) WHICH GENERATE THEIR OWN
REVENUES.

3. CONSERVATIVE AND LIBERAL CRITICS SEEMED HARD PUT TO FIND GROUNDS
ON WHICH TO ATTACK BUDGET. MAIN CRITICISMS WERE THAT BUDGET DID NOT

GO FAR ENOUGH TO (A) STIMULATE JOBS IN PRIVATE SECTOR, AND (B)
PROMOTE ENERGY CONSERVATION.

4. THE PRESYN ON THE OTHER HAND, WAS FAIRLY CONTENT WITH OUTLINES
OF BUDGET, AND THE WINNIPEG TRIBUNE NOTED THAT MANITOBA HAS DONE
WHAT NEARLY EVERY OTHER PROVINCE HAS HAD TO DO -- TRIM ITS
SAILS AND HOPE THE ECONOMIC WEATHER WILL CHANGE.
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